/375 cont./

261 almost no food value, they stuff their rumbling stomachs with them. Fortunately, snow storms (344) such that make any outside

> 344. A much greater impediment than snowstorms is the agitated sea when meter-high waves roll up from the south and churn up the water even in remote channels.

activity impossible seldom last more than three or four days, and that, after all, can be endured. In such periods of fasting the people quickly become emaciated, but as soon as they have enough food they recover almost as quickly, and then they can eat quite surprising quantities of meat." Sometimes the emergency can reach such a point that the people begin to chew pieces of leather. Darwin (d):245 ventured the false assertion [346] that "if in winter they are plagued with hunger, they would sooner kill and eat their old women than slaughter their dogs." The reliable Bridges (h):206 (345) and later Hyades (q):320

> 345. He specified: "There have been occasions of extreme hunger, when bad weather kept them from obtaining provisions from the forest, shore, or sea, during which they ate their leather shoes and thongs, but no one thought of proposing the eating of human flesh" /translated from Spanish/.

[374] both very definitely disagreed with this. The Indians, however, do steal from any European settled there if they are unable to obtain the most necessary food in any other way (346). When the

> 346. Bridges (e):333, for example, concedes this: "The natives killed some cattle and goats, and they steal crops from the fields; still, one is surprised at the limited extent of their thefts, if one considers the half-starved state in which they live."

/1926 cont./

674 "Since our coming here in 1871, we enumerated with the natives twenty-two murders, or deaths from violence amongst the Yahgans" /cited in English/. Hyades (e):721 regards this figure as low: "it means an average of less than two violent deaths per year, and this in a country where each one redresses wrongs and exacts justice for himself" /translated from French/. He (e):721 believes that one reason for this low figure is a deeply rooted conviction of the Indians "in regarding human life as sacred" /translated from French/. Bridges later only very rarely mentioned a murder (410). All this,

> 410. Without further explanation he (MM, XVIII, 184; 1864) writes, for example: "Here [near Ushuaia] I found the native John Willis, who killed his wife some two years ago" /cited in English/.

however, does not make me change my own opinion that murder occurred at least twice as often as Bridges and Hyades say. I am relying on the dependable reports of the Lawrence brothers and aged Indians. We must keep in mind the irascible nature of our Yamana and the many occasions for this deed, as a result of which they had to take the law into their own hands.

•266 It would be unthinkable to imagine that they would murder a person out of cannibalistic intentions. There is no convincing proof of anthropophagy: reliable informants emphatically deny this custom, and the Lawrence brothers never heard of it, to say nothing of never having observed it. Instances of it, beginning with the L'Hermite fleet (p. 51 /untranslated/) which is referred to for affirmation, have never been absolutely settled. Bridges (i):14 decidedly opposes this false accusation, since for all of them "is human life a very sacred thing and for this reason all the relations of the murdered person were in honour bound to avenge his death" /cited in English/. The Yamana even detest animals that gnaw at [125] human corpses, such as foxes, rats, and vultures. They do not even take water from brooks where there are many rats, and they give as their reason: "Animals that devour human flesh drink of this water!" If they see a dog come up to a corpse and start devouring it, or even try to dig out a body, they beat it on the spot, even

/990 cont./

266 though, as we know, they set great store by a dog. Whenever I /991/ wanted to discuss anthropophagy with them, they persistently refused because of aversion and disgust, and they shook their heads as a sign that they regard such a thing as impossible even among other peoples.

627 578 Every murder, no matter how the murderer justifies or excuses himself, brings revenge in its wake and usually involves a number of persons. Details will be given below. The yékamus with his machinations is a by no means surprising cause of serious quarrels. It would be premature to go into that at this point; his behavior must first be described in detail, which will be done later. Hostilities and acts of murder arising from his interference are, as usual, settled by the parties involved and with the help of friendly yékamus. Thus, the causes of discord and disputes among the Yamana are the same as among other peoples; in view of their character traits, the causes are primarily "insult, theft, adultery, and the death of a relative" /cited in English/ according to Lothrop (b):164 and Hyades (q):374. Mistreatment of the wife should be added. In general, quarrels and discord are not prolonged and sooner or later they are settled again. As has already been reported in Outes (g):59, "small differences are settled among themselves without much difficulty" /translated from Spanish/.

b. Ordinary Quarrels

578 The Yamana certainly are extraordinarily irascible and vengeful; sometimes they simply cannot control themselves and are little amenable to appeasing words. They are neither warlike nor combative by nature, however. This characterizes their natural inclination, but it by no means denies that they easily become involved in quarrels and brawls. "They are," as Hyades (q):374 confirms, "very susceptible and, as a result, inclined to quarrels and strife" /translated from French/. Their predominant tendency is to live in peace with others as much as possible and not to become involved in disputes. This is the sole reason why a family will sometimes remain hidden for years and have no contact, or almost none, with any of their countrymen. Despard

/1280 cont./

implicit in what Missionary Phillips relates. One sultry day when he complained to a young Fuegian about the heat, the latter cried, alarmed: 'Do not say the sun to hot, immediately it will hide and the wind will blow cold.'"

Thus the conception of késpix is very broad and contains many things which cannot be summed up in a terse formula. Hyades (q):255 discussed this word as "an intranslatable term referring to fantastic beings who live in deserted caves in the middle of dense forests" /translated from French/. The idea of késpix must not be so limited, however, as will be adequately shown in the following discussion.

1. Cannibals

From the start it does not seem strange that the Yamana, too, in one way or another, believe in cannibals. This belief may have originated in their apprehensiveness and fear of the Halakwulup (p. 205 /untranslated/) who are directly adjacent to the western group. A particular incident may have brought this about in the first place. One thing is certain, that almost all the Yamana designate a group within the Halakwulup tribe, about which nothing is definitely known, as the asásan, which is the same as calling them cannibals. Sometimes they include all the Halakwulup in this belief. There are others among the Yamana who include only the group living farther north somewhere near Smith Channel, some of whom it is believed now and then appear in Beagle Channel. Occasionally someone will even suspect the western Yamana, the so-called Inanumála, of practicing this habit (241). It is said: These asásan have long canoes

241. Bridges (VSA:XI, 259;1864) had already learned: "These natives say there is a tribe speaking their language, but with a peculiar accent, they call them 'Ishawa,' who are cannibals, but they

/1280 cont./

186
[266]

strenuously deny any such enormities among themselves" /cited in English/. Hyades (b): 1346 and (p):331, on the other hand, definitely asserts: "There are no traditions of anthropophagy" /translated from French/. If he means by this that the Yamana themselves do not practice cannibalism, he is perfectly right (p. 252 /untranslated/).

of solid /1281/ construction, which accommodate many men. Because all of them row, the canoe moves with extraordinary speed. The asásan invade Yamana territory only at night. Anyone they catch at that time is dragged off and devoured. They take advantage of the dark so that they will be successful and meet no resistance. During the day they stay within their boundaries or hide in a sheltered spot in the territory of the Yamana until night falls, for only under its protection do they carry out their surprise attacks. Not only the western group but all the Yamana live in constant dread of the asásan, precisely because they come up very swiftly and then depart again. They are also called wĕlapatux, "murderers" (cf. BD:619), because they murder and eat anyone who falls into their hands. A third designation, Hapánana-yámana, "the people in Hapananúši," is derived from a myth (p. 1162); it is also pronounced "Apananŭši" (p. 243 /untranslated/).

Even the young Bridges (a):207 came across traces of this belief: "Cannibalism is unknown, but they have reports that it is practised by some people far to the westward, whom they call Hapúnanóoshiaúla" /cited in English/. Later he (k):237 wrote more explicitly: "They believe in the existence of certain murderers in the west, called asasyu, attributing to them wondrous powers and a fabulous wickedness. They supposedly wander at night, traveling in fast and strongly built canoes, with the object of killing anyone they meet. It is said that they conceal themselves with trickery in such a way that they could never be found, but stories tell of this one and that one who, having seen them at night, succeeded in escaping from them" /translated from Spanish/ (242).

242. Likewise Bridges (i):15, Dabbene

2: Cooper E-4 (no date) 1946 SH6 Yahgan SH6

clubs, fists, and so forth were used freely, with no holds barred, but grave wounds or deaths were uncommon. Organized warfare did not exist, and the *Yahgan* had no defensive weapons. The weapons used in their feuds were primarily made for, and adapted to, hunting.

Social relations within and between the dialectic and local groups appear to have been normally irenic, but violence and bloodshed were not infrequent. The friends of fighting parties usually intervened, both by persuasion and by force, to restore peace. A murder was strongly condemned, and the murderer often became an outcast. Bridges found 22 cases of homicide between 1871 and 1884—an annual rate per population something like 10 times as high as that of the United States. Mercy killings occurred for the purpose of putting an end to the sufferings of the hopelessly ill. Human sacrifice was unknown; so too was premeditated suicide.

The evidence that the *Yahgan* practiced no form of cannibalism—gastronomic, famine, ritual, or other—is convincing beyond all reasonable doubt. They would not even eat animals suspected of devouring human flesh.

ECONOMIC LIFE

Ownership.—The *Yahgan* resented and avenged exploitative trespass upon their tribal territory or attempted occupation of any part thereof by non-*Yahgan*, Indian or White. So, too, did members of any one of the five dialectic groups (Gusinde, 1937, pp. 964–965) or, according to Koppers (1928 b, p. 176), of any one of the numerous local groups, by nonmembers. Since these local groups seemingly were chiefly kinship groups (cf. supra, Political Life), the *Yahgan* land-tenure system resembled the family-hunting-ground system. There was no exclusive tenure by kinship circles as such, by biological families, or by individuals.

Members of one dialectic or local group could, however, exploit the territory of other groups to secure food in grave shortage, to feast on a stranded whale, and to gather firestones and suitable canoe bark, which were found only in certain parts of the *Yahgan* territory. Ownership of personal property, such as weapons, clothing, adornments, and baskets, was vested in the individual. Women and children, as well as men, had well-recognized rights to such things. The ownership of certain other things—food, hut, canoe—appears to have been vested in the biological family.

Food was looked upon as the property and gift of the Supreme Being; wasting it was disrespectful to Him.

Title to personal property was acquired through occupation, labor, donation, and barter. Barter took two forms: plain, or exchange of goods for goods; and by exchange of presents. There was no cur-

3: Lothrop E-5 (1924-1925) 1928
SH6 Yahgan SH6

Women wear rather more clothing, that is, they have nearly the whole skin of a guanaco, or seal, wrapped about them, and usually a diminutive apron. The upper part of the wrapper, above a string which is tied around the waist, serves to carry an infant. Neither men nor women have any substitute for shoes.

Both sexes oil themselves, or rub their bodies with grease; and daub their faces and bodies with red, black, or white. A fillet is often worn around the head, which upon ordinary occasions is simply a string, made of sinews; but if going to war or dressed for show, the fillet is ornamented with white down, white feathers, or pieces of cloth, if they have obtained any from shipping. . . .

It is rather curious that each of these natives is trained to a particular pursuit: thus, one becomes an adept with the spear; another with the sling; another with a bow and arrows; but this excellence in one line does not hinder their attaining a considerable proficiency in all the others.

Before entering on the details of Yahgan life we shall dwell briefly on the charges of savagery and cannibalism made by numerous writers. As early as 1600 the Alacaluf were thought to be cannibals, for in that year Van Noort marooned on Santa Maria island one of his officers charged with insubordination, in the belief that he would die of hunger or be eaten by the savages. A quarter of a century later Jaques L'Hermite charged the Yahgan with cannibalism. In more recent years Darwin and Fitzroy have repeated the accusation on hearsay evidence, and their dictum has been widely published. However, no white man has ever witnessed the act of anthropophagy among any of the Fuegian tribes, while in recent years those who have lived with the natives and come to know them well all agree that the idea of eating human flesh is as repugnant to a Fuegian as to a European. According to Martial (p. 193) the Yahgan ordinarily do not eat dog, fox, or rat, because these animals will eat human flesh.

The imputation of barbarity, on the other hand, rests on firmer ground, for there are well-authenticated instances of attack by the Yahgan on European crews. The earliest of these resulted in the death at Nassau bay in 1624 of seventeen men from L'Hermite's ships; the most widely published was the massacre at Woolyia in 1859 of the crew of the missionary schooner *Allen Gardiner*. What provoked these attacks is a secret intombed with their victims. Early voyagers habitually kidnapped natives to serve as pilots and thus aroused merited resentment. Native women often have